

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air the anti-Kerry propaganda film "Stolen River" days before the election (under the false labels of "documentary" or "news") is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. Sinclair's forcing its stations to air a blatantly one-sided view of an important issue at election time without balancing their presentations with the other side (e.g. by airing the film "Going Upriver") is an abuse of the liberties granted to it, and represents a threat to our democracy.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.